

# Tirahi language

**Tirahi**, also called Dardù, is a nearly extinct if not already extinct<sup>[3]</sup> Dardic language<sup>[4]</sup> of the Kohistani group spoken in a few villages in the southeast of Jalalabad in the Nangarhar Province of eastern Afghanistan. It is spoken by older adults, who are likewise fluent in Pashto.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Tirahis were expelled from Tirah in the present-day Khyber District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, by the Afridi Pashtuns.<sup>[5]</sup> Georg Morgenstierne claimed that Tirahi is "probably the remnant of a dialect group extending from Tirah through the Peshawar district into Swat and Dir."<sup>[6]</sup>

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|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Contents</b>                             |
| <b>Geographic Distribution</b>              |
| <b>Classification and Related Languages</b> |
| <b>Grammar</b>                              |
| Nouns and Adjectives                        |
| Pronouns                                    |
| Verbs                                       |
| Example Sentences                           |
| <b>References</b>                           |
| <b>External links</b>                       |

| Tirahi                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Native to</b>       | Afghanistan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>       | perhaps 5,000 (no date) <sup>[1]</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Native speakers</b> | (undated figure of 100) <sup>[1]</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Language family</b> | Indo-European <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Indo-Iranian<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Indo-Aryan<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dardic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kohistani<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Tirahi</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul> |
| Language codes         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>ISO 639-3</b>       | tra                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Glottolog</b>       | tira1253 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/tira1253) <sup>[2]</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## Geographic Distribution

Spoken in the Nangarhar Province of Northeastern Afghanistan, there are about 100 native speakers today, if any. This is mainly due to the majority of the Tirahi people having assimilated into the dominant Pashtun culture of Afghanistan. In its place, Tirahi connects the Dardic languages spoken in Dardistan with languages which reach down to the mouth of the Indus River, showing Dardic influence. Thus, it could be the missing link connecting a chain of languages between the Hindu Kush and Goa.<sup>[7]</sup> In possibly being the missing link, Dardic influence can even be found in the Central Indian Bhil Languages as well as the Konkani dialect of Marathi.<sup>[8]</sup> Tirahi is also spoken in a couple of villages southeast of the Afghan city of Jalalabad,<sup>[9]</sup> such as Jaba, Mitarani, and Bara-khel.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Classification and Related Languages

Tirahi is a Dardic language, along with Kalasha, Gawar-Bati, and Pashayi languages.<sup>[7]</sup> Further, Tirahi is part of the sub-group of Kohistani languages along with languages such as Bateri, Chilisso, Gowro, and others. However, Tirahi also shares with languages spoken farther to the east, such as Kashmiri.<sup>[7]</sup> As a Dardic Language, Tirahi strongly preserves some vocabulary of spoken Sanskrit (cow - dēn in Tirahi,

dhēnuh in Sanskrit, hand - ast in Tirahi, hastah in Sanskrit).<sup>[7]</sup> Being a language spoken in Afghanistan, Tirahi shares various words and grammatical constructs with Pashto, a language spoken throughout Afghanistan to which many Tirahi speakers have become accustomed to speaking. Since Tirahi is entirely separated from the other Dardic languages, located south of the Kabul River and west of the Khyber Pass, rendering it wholly encased by Pashto.<sup>[9]</sup> Tirahi also shares some vocabulary with Kashmiri and Shina such as the Tirahi *mala*, for a father, the Kashmiri *mol*, and the Shina *malo*.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Grammar

Tirahi shows much influence from Pashto in phonology, lexicon and even morphology. However, its vocabulary exhibits a connection to Kohistani dialects. Therefore, Tirahi seems to occupy an intermediate position between Pashto and the Kohistani group.<sup>[11]</sup> Morgenstirne claims that Tirahi is "probably the remnant of a dialect group extending from Tirahi through the Peshawar district into Swat and Dir."<sup>[6]</sup>

## Nouns and Adjectives

Tirahi is an inflected language, having 5 cases: Nominative, Oblique, Genitive, Dative, and Ablative. Adjectives, verbs, and nouns usually agree according to gender. Consonant-final nouns add e or a along with their traditional endings.<sup>[12]</sup> There appears to be an indefinite article, added to the end of the word as an -ī, similar to Farsi.<sup>[7]</sup>

|            | Singular        | Plural  |  | Singular     | Plural     |
|------------|-----------------|---------|--|--------------|------------|
| Nominative | mala - 'father' | mala    |  | adam - 'man' | adam-a     |
| Oblique    | mala            | mal-an  |  | adam-a       | adam-an    |
| Dative     | mala-s          | mala    |  | adam-a-s     | adam-an    |
| Ablative   | mala-si         | mala-si |  | adam-a-si    | adam-an    |
| Genitive   | mala-ma         | mala-si |  | adam-a-ma    | adam-an-si |

## Pronouns

1st person pronouns:

|            | Singular                         | Plural |
|------------|----------------------------------|--------|
| Nominative | au, ao                           | mā, ao |
| Oblique    | mē                               | mēn    |
| Dative     | ma-si                            | ma-si  |
| Genitive   | myāna (m), myāni (s), myāna (p?) | N/A    |

2nd person pronouns:

|            | Singular                                     | Plural     |
|------------|----------------------------------------------|------------|
| Nominative | tu, to                                       | tao        |
| Oblique    | tē                                           | tā         |
| Dative     | ta-si                                        | N/A        |
| Genitive   | cā-na (m), cā-nī (m), cā-nī (f), cā-na (mfp) | tāma, tema |

## Verbs

### 1. Non finite forms

1. Infinitive: stem + an (*karan* - 'to do/make')

### 2. Tense-aspect forms

1. Imperative Singular: stem, Imperative Plural: stem + V
2. Present-future: root + endings - 1st: - m, 2nd: -s, 3rd: -e, 1st plural: -en
3. Definite Present: da/de + present-future

## Example Sentences

- *Abo-e kata dur thi?* ('Village' + 'how much far' + 'is')
  - "How far is your village?"
- *Pali de kham* ('Bread' + Definite Future + 'Eat')
  - "I am eating bread."
- *La brok odasta ga* ('He' + 'Very' + 'Hungry' + 'become/go')
  - "He became very hungry"
- *Ao mara ga-m* ('I' + 'die' + 'become')
  - "I died/am dead"

## References

1. Tirahi ([https://www.ethnologue.com/15/show\\_language/tra](https://www.ethnologue.com/15/show_language/tra)) at *Ethnologue* (15th ed., 2005)
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11. Jain, Dhanesh; Cardona, George (2003-01-01). *The Indo-Aryan Languages* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=C9MPCd6mO6sC>). Routledge. p. 857. ISBN 9780700711307.
12. Jain, Dhanesh; Cardona, George (2003-01-01). *The Indo-Aryan Languages* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=C9MPCd6mO6sC>). Routledge. pp. 857–9, also for all grammatical information below. ISBN 9780700711307.

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## External links

- [YouTube sample of Tirahi](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzr9HH9fXBY) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzr9HH9fXBY>)

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